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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001721

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DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: S/E NATSIOS MEETING WITH VICE PRESIDENT ALI OSMAN
TAHA

REF: KHARTOUM 1709

Classified By: CDA Alberto Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: S/E Andrew Natsios met November 3 with GOS Vice President Ali Osman Taha. Taha, the chief NCP negotiators of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), said that there is "no time to waste" on implementation of the CPA. He said all of the decisions taken the previous night by the NCP/SPLM joint implementation committee will be formalized in Presidential decrees before January 9, the third anniversary of the signing of the CPA. He said the committees will continue their work with greater detail and will study "metrics for implementation." Taha noted that Abyei is the only protocol without a breakthrough and insisted "we must do something." Taha said he believes oil will help resolve the conflict. Taha said US assistance on the Abyei issue (and on oil and JIUs) might be helpful at some point but asked that the two parties be allowed to resolve the issue between themselves first. End summary.

PROGRESS ON CPA

12. (C) During their meeting November 3, S/E Natsios told Vice President Taha that there is a small window between now and January in which to improve US-Sudan relations, but only if there is tangible progress on the CPA and Darfur. Natsios noted the positive reports from both the SPLM and the NCP and encouraged swift resolution of the Abyei issue. "If you can solve Abyei, the CPA will not only be on track, it will be accelerated," said Natsios. He pointed to the importance of Abyei to the SPLM leadership, especially Ngok Dinka from the region such as GOSS Foreign Minister Deng Alor, who comes from the royal family of a paramount chief in Abyei. Natsios offered to help with arbitration on the Abyei issue if necessary noting that "Abyei is an issue for all of the South, not just the Dinka. Natsios encouraged the NCP to treat the SPLM with respect and to be aware of their sensitivities, noting that on at least one occasion the SPLM was not consulted, such as when Jan Pronk was fired last year.

13. (C) Vice President Taha confirmed to S/E Natsios that the NCP and the SPLM had reached a breakthrough on CPA implementation (reftel). Taha underlined the urgency of moving forward on the CPA, confidently predicting that in the next several weeks the joint implementation committee will make further progress, adding additional detail to the plan and laying down metrics for measuring implementation. Taha

said President Bashir would issue all of the enabling decrees by January 9, which would allow the SPLM to rejoin the government. Taha said he had spoken with President Bashir after the session and that the President had endorsed all the outcomes of the meeting. In response to S/E Natsios' discussion of the importance of the CPA to southerners as a vehicle for redressing historical wrongs, Taha acknowledged the "psychological dimension" of the CPA and said it was a mistake for the parties to focus only on technical issues while neglecting the human dimension. This is one of the problems which had led to the impasse, "a focus on legalities and not on the personal. We need individual confidence building." Taha said that in his meetings with President Bashir they had discussed the importance of confidence building measures and the need to exercise restraint in the media. He said "the spirit of last night's meeting has been frank, sincere and practical."

14. (C) Taha noted that Abyei is the only CPA protocol without a breakthrough. He said the parties might need assistance from the US at some point but requested that they be given room to attempt to find a solution among themselves first. Taha said it is critically important that the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) deploy as soon as possible, which he said would reduce the chances of a return to war. Taha said he believes oil will help resolve the conflict, since it is in both sides' interests to keep the oil (and the oil revenues) flowing. He noted that the SPLM sometimes thinks the North is depriving the South of oil revenues "and that is not true," he added that "we may need the help of the Americans to convince them that we are not cheating."

15. (C) Taha noted that the SPLM/NCP agreement's security arrangements "contains some echoes of the the proposals the

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Americans made in October." He added that "if we can get the JIUs to deploy in remaining places in the South, including the oil fields, it will really lessen the possible tension that could lead to war. The Joint Defense Board (JDB) will come up with a plan and we may still need the US's support in making this happen. He said that the NCP had asked Salva Kiir to deliver a "positive message to the Americans" on Sudan during his upcoming trip to Washington.

DARFUR/SIRTE

16. (C) With regard to Darfur, Natsios urged swift deployment of UNAMID to stabilize Darfur and demonstrate GOS commitment to the peace process. Natsios warned that neighboring countries are having a negative influence on the peace talks in Sirte. He noted unconfirmed reports that the Eritreans had armed Abdul Wahid Al-Nur to undermine the talks, and that Abdul Wahid had even begun attacking members of his own Fur tribe who wanted him to attend the peace talks. Natsios said the US view is that the talks can begin and end in Sirte, but that moving the talks to another country in the meantime might be more effective. Taha responded that the Sudanese are disappointed with Libyan leader Qaddafi's theatrics in Sirte, and would ask him not to take "such a negative attitude." Taha said he would discuss the Darfur talks venue issue with Presidential Advisor (and bitter rival of Taha within the NCP) Nafie Al-Nafie (who led the GOS delegation in Sirte) when he returns from South Africa with President Bashir.

COMMENT

17. (C) This is the first contact VP Taha has had with Americans in a very long time as he struggled to survive the internecine NCP political struggle that has sometimes portrayed him as "America's man within the party" and so a figure of deep suspicion to Al-Bashir. Taha was also criticized internally because very clear American promises

tied to the CPA, such as removing Sudan from the Terrorism List where never fulfilled (they weren't at the time because of the Darfur crisis). Taha's earnest comments on CPA (the CPA is his baby) implementation were convincing, with the Sudanese eager to be viewed as making progress on all fronts. His interest in having the US help with brokering compromise with the SPLM on the oil revenue issue and the all-important JIUs was something new. He also joined the unanimous Sudanese elite opinion that Libya was a poor choice for the Darfur talks and that Qaddafi made it worse. End Comment.

18. (U) This cable was not cleared by S/E Natsios before he left Khartoum.
FERNANDEZ